

Proclamation 5889 of October 24, 1988

National Lupus Awareness Month, 1988

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

This year, we again set aside the month of October to mark our great concern for the thousands of Americans who suffer from lupus. An immune system disorder of unknown cause, lupus in its systemic form may affect the joints, skin, and one or more internal organs, such as the kidney, heart, and brain.

Lupus is a chronic disease in which there is always the potential threat of serious illness and disability. The disease can occur in men, but women in their childbearing years are the majority of its victims. Minorities, especially blacks, are particularly vulnerable; lupus is three times more prevalent in black women than in white women.

Ordinarily, the immune system protects against infection by producing antibodies that successfully combat foreign substances. In people with lupus, the immune system produces abnormal antibodies that react harmfully against the individual's own tissues.

To combat lupus, we need new research findings and new approaches to diagnosis and treatment. Scientists in biology, biochemistry, immunology, genetics, and other fields are seeking to understand its causes and disease processes to develop better means of detection, treatment, and prevention. If this work is to continue, and if we are to take advantage of the knowledge we have already gained, public awareness of lupus and of the importance of continuing scientific research on this disease is critical. The Federal Government and private health organizations are working together to promote awareness of lupus and research on it. This collaboration ultimately will conquer this significant public health problem.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 303, has designated the month of October 1988 as "National Lupus Awareness Month" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of the event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of October 1988 as National Lupus Awareness Month. I urge the people of the United States and educational, philanthropic, scientific, medical, and health care organizations and professionals to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirteenth.

RONALD REAGAN